

In Memoriam.

JAMES S. SEYMOUR

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AUBURN, N. Y.,
SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 24, 1876.

BY

CHARLES HAWLEY, D.D.,
PASTOR.



AUBURN, N. Y.:
C. P. WILLIAMS.
1876.

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DISCOURSE.

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”—ROMANS xiv. 7, 8.

WE have in this text the standard of a true life. In its full meaning it is applicable to such only as give themselves, consciously and without reserve, to the Lord Jesus. None of us, under any circumstances, belongs to himself. No human life, however selfish in its purpose, can be shut up within itself. It must, to a greater or less extent, affect other interests and other lives. No more can one die to himself. His death touches others; and, though gone from this world, he has left in it influences which are operating, it may be, with increasing power, after they have forever passed from his control. The Christian accepts and acts upon the principle that by right he belongs to his Saviour. The ownership is supreme. There is no exception in any purpose or relation or act while living, and none in the issue of death itself. This lordship of Christ is secured in His own death and resurrection. “For,” as the apostle adds, “to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” Thus every true life, lived among men, has this principle for its central force; and its value,

rightly estimated, is measured by the character formed and the work accomplished in this spirit of loyalty to Christ. Here also is its power to stimulate and determine other lives for good; and therefore it becomes our duty to cherish every such example, and to commend it for imitation.

This is the object of the memorial service which has brought us together; and I am to present to you, as well as I may be able, the life and character of one in fellowship with this church for more than half a century, and a citizen of Auburn during almost the entire period of its history.

It is nearly sixty years since James S. Seymour removed to this place from Hartford, Ct., to take a position of trust, demanding both integrity, and capacity for business, of a high order. The first bank in this vicinity had just been organized under favorable auspices, and he had been chosen its first cashier, at twenty-six years of age. His early life had taken shape from influences well adapted to develop and test character. He was a native of West Hartford, Ct., born April 13, 1791, and traced his descent to Richard Seymour, the first of his ancestors that came to this country, and one of the original landholders of the town of Hartford in 1639. The name appears at that time to have been written *Seamore*. It was originally St. Maur. His father, Timothy Seymour, was a highly esteemed citizen, and at one time a man of considerable wealth; but, as I have understood, met with a reverse of fortune, leaving his family, at his death, in somewhat straitened circumstances. His mother was a descendant of the godly Puritan minister, Thomas Hooker, who fled with a chosen company from persecution in England to the vicinity of Boston in 1633, where the devoted band was organized as a church of which he was made pastor;

and in June, 1636, at the head of his congregation, consisting of about one hundred souls, crossed the wilderness to the Connecticut River, where they joined the settlement of Hartford, which had been founded the previous autumn. The minister of the parish of West Hartford, with which the family was connected, was Dr. Nathan Perkins, one of the patriotic preachers of the Revolution and pastor of the congregation for sixty-three years. He is described by a contemporary as "a man of highly respectable talents, good common sense, and uncommon prudence; kind, affectionate, and cheerful in his social relations, and a pattern of punctuality in all his engagements." Under such influences, pervaded by culture and piety, James passed his early life, the youngest of eight children. He is remembered, as a child, for his gentle and loving ways, gleesome and sportive habits, and for the promise of his boyhood, as it developed into manly effort.

About the time of his father's death, which occurred in 1812, he became a mercantile clerk in Hartford; and in the autumn of 1814, while the war with Great Britain was still in progress, formed a copartnership with Samuel G. Goodrich (afterward widely known as Peter Parley) in the manufacture of pocket-books, the capital for which was furnished by Mr. Seymour. The genial author of the *Recollections of a Lifetime* alludes to the circumstance, among his earlier reminiscences, and tells us what became of the venture. "The return of peace put an end to the enterprise. We got out of it with a small loss; and my kind-hearted partner pocketed this, for he had money and I had none. He forgave me; and would have done the same had the defalcation been more considerable, for he was a true friend." Different as were the subsequent

fortunes of these two young men—the one in literature a useful and accomplished writer, the other in finance an upright and sagacious banker—they ever held each other in the esteem and confidence of their first friendship. Indeed, they had other and more refining associations than those of trade, during their residence in Hartford, which, beside being a thrifty commercial centre, was also noted for a high tone of general intelligence and social respectability. Let me mention here the formation of a literary coterie of young people, in which Mr. Seymour, with his friend Goodrich, took a prominent part—the presiding genius of which was the gifted Mrs. Sigourney, then Miss Huntley—as indicating the type of social influences with which he was then familiar. It was an association which combined innocent recreation with refining culture. To denote its select character, it was called “THE BOUQUET,” each member of the circle taking the name of some flower, either a favorite, or as suggesting some personal characteristic. And among the treasured mementoes of our departed brother, I find a charming lyric, addressed to him by Mrs. Sigourney as early as 1821, two years after her marriage, giving, in the language of flowers, the changes, some sad and others pleasant, which time had wrought in the select circle. The closing lines have a tender interest to us who knew the man, as suggestive of some of the marked features of his character, then in the earlier processes of growth, giving pledge of the virtue and grace which, now that he is gone, shed such fragrance over his memory.

“ Years have dispersed
Our scattered BOUQUET, and few hearts retain
Its treasured image. Thou, whose soul enshrines
Its fond remembrance ; whose fair garden stores
Its living emblem ; guard with watchful care

That purple special flower, which, for thy sake,
 Those who embalm the Bouquet still will love.
 God bless thee, LILAC ! Spread thy fostering shade,
 As thou were wont, o'er the neglected plants
 Of want and sorrow. Bid thy fragrance cheer
 The soft and virtuous charities of life ;
 Then shall the time, when every flower must fade,
 Be with thee the harbinger and pledge
 Of bloom immortal."

The affection with which Mr. Seymour cherished his early associations, even to old age, was one of his most characteristic and beautiful traits. He kept them bright and fresh in his memory, and clung tenaciously to the friendships formed in his youth. In the neat files of his carefully preserved correspondence occur the names of some of the choicest spirits of his native State, eminent for their virtues, and in later days distinguished in the public service. His visits to Hartford and vicinity comprised, for many years, his only recreation by way of travel ; and not until the changes, which sweep away a whole generation, gave a tinge of sadness to familiar scenes, were they discontinued. But in his remembrance, among his varied bequests, of the church within whose pale he was born and baptized, together with the noble institutions of Christian charity which adorn the city where he began active life, he gives lasting proof of the strength of early attachments, in forms of benevolence which there, as well as here, will remain to preserve his name after the monumental marble over his grave shall have crumbled into dust.

In retracing the steps by which Mr. Seymour was led to Auburn, I have been interested to find that it was mainly through the agency of Thomas Mumford, one of the originators of the Bank of Auburn, and its first President, who, it

will be remembered was one of the founders of the First Congregational Society of Aurelius in 1801, from which this church was formed ten years afterward, and who was also one of the largest donors to found the Auburn Theological Seminary. This excellent and public spirited man was from Connecticut, and very naturally looked to the financial centre of his native State for a young man of some experience in that specific business, and especially for one whose principles and habits were formed after the New England type. Negotiations were first opened with an older brother, but he declining the offer, they resulted readily in the selection of James, at the time a clerk in the Bank of Hartford, for the position. The whole proceeding is suggestive of what Mr. Seymour himself would have done in similar circumstances. It is very like the interest he was wont to take in securing young men of good principles and promise for positions of responsibility, or in aiding such on their entrance upon business with wise counsel and substantial aid. I might speak of many instances that have come to my knowledge, not through him, always reticent of his good deeds, but from the lips of those who can never forget his kindness. A single one will suffice to illustrate in this regard his characteristic ways. As early as 1830, desirous that Auburn should have a book-store which should meet the demands of that branch of trade in such a community, and at the same time be a healthy moral and even religious centre, he applied to an old Hartford friend,* then a well known bookseller in Utica, for a young man whom he could recommend as competent

* William Williams. The son of this excellent man, S. Wells Williams, L.L.D., for many years the Secretary of the American Legation in China, has received the appointment to the recently established Professorship of the Chinese Language and Literature in Yale College.

in these respects, to take charge of such a business. The request met with a ready response in a letter of introduction commending one who had just attained his majority, and had acquired a thorough practical knowledge of the business, in the employ and under the eye of the friend to whom the application had been confided. The details were soon arranged. One of the fine block of stores on Genesee street, between North and Exchange, was purchased by Mr. Seymour, who also furnished the capital to start the enterprise; and thus commenced the business career of one whose name Auburn holds in high repute among her former citizens, and which now stands at the head of one of the largest and most honorable publishing houses in this country.* It was also the beginning of an intimate and life long friendship; and the two friends are here to be gratefully mentioned together, as having joined in a gift of ten thousand dollars each, for a special object in the recent successful effort to retain, by a fuller endowment, the Theological Seminary in this city, and this at the most critical period in the history of the institution. The incident has additional significance from the fact that Mr. Seymour is the first one of our citizens to lay the foundation of a public library, in a most liberal benefaction—the fuller growth, doubtless, of the kindred idea which prompted him, forty-five years before, to see that Auburn had a suitable bookstore.†

It was on the 11th of August, 1817, the day the bank was first opened for business, that Mr. Seymour entered upon the duties of his office. He remained its cashier until 1849, when he was chosen its sixth president. The

* Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor & Co., New York.

† The bequest for the Library includes the building purchased by Mr. Seymour for the book store, and occupied as such by Mr. Henry Ivison during the sixteen years of his residence in Auburn.

fiftieth anniversary of the institution was observed by presenting him with a fitting testimonial in recognition of his personal service and devotion to its interests, during the half century. He deemed it an appropriate occasion for his retirement; and in a communication addressed to the Board of Directors, in which he briefly reviews the history of the bank, and with singular modesty gives credit for its success to others, ignoring himself, he tendered his resignation. But the proposition could not be entertained for a moment by the guardians of the institution, and at their earnest solicitation he consented to remain in the discharge of his accustomed duties, which he did until smitten by the stroke which terminated his life. He had survived all his original associates in its management, and was at his death the oldest bank officer in the State, if not in the country. It will be conceded by all, without detracting from the service and reputation of those who have shared in the direction of this well-known corporation, that to no other one man is it so largely indebted for the high character it has reached and maintained among our strongest and most trusted banking institutions. Through the changes, revulsions, and perils of these fifty-eight years, this faithful and fortunate man has stood at his post, observing with scrupulous devotion every detail of duty; meeting with firmness and prudence every emergency; resisting with an integrity that never wavered every temptation with which great financial trusts are beset; and retaining to the last the unquestioning confidence of all in his wisdom, equity, and sterling honesty. He has left the impress of his name and character on the institution itself; a pure example in a position in which too many have proved false, and a bright track over tempted ground where not a few have erred, only to perish in disgrace.

Now if we go back, through this long period of service, to Auburn as it was in the year 1817, we find the new and thriving village attracting a class of active, enterprising young men, who were to give shape to its social and religious history for two generations. It was a year of memorable interest in the history of this congregation. Its first church edifice had just been completed, the same within whose walls our brother first publicly professed his faith in Christ, and continued a devoted worshiper for more than fifty years, and by whose liberality, very largely, it was carefully taken down to give place to this structure, and rebuilt on a lot—also his gift—into the comely chapel which so appropriately bears his name. It was a timely gift to a mission enterprise, resulting in the organization of a fourth Presbyterian church in our city, while it gratified a sacred sentiment which could not allow the building, thronged with saintly memories, to fall into less holy uses, or to disappear with its hallowed associations so fraught with the grace and power of God.*

The first Sabbath Mr. Seymour passed in Auburn, on a visit preparatory to his removal here, he attended service in the new sanctuary, then so recently opened for worship that the white paint had not yet hardened on the back of the high square pew he occupied, as the young stranger had occasion to know from the marks left on a new suit of black—a reminiscence to which some of us have heard him playfully allude as among his first experiences in Auburn. In the congregation on that Lord's day were some of the men to whom he afterward was bound by the closest ties of

* In addition to what he had done in his lifetime for the new enterprise, Mr. Seymour has left a residuary legacy which, at a moderate estimate, will amount to \$12,000, to the congregation worshipping in Seymour Chapel, and an equal sum to the First Church.

Christian affection and sympathy—the eloquent and fervent LANSING, who was to find in him a devoted friend and trusted counsellor, then at the very opening of his blessed ministry on this ground. The great revival of that year, which added to this church on the single communion, in August, a number equal to one-tenth of the entire population, was giving forth its first signs of gracious power. It pervaded the village with the atmosphere of religion, and exerted an untold influence in determining its moral and spiritual history.

I cannot mention any date at which Mr. Seymour's religious experience may be said to have commenced, or that he regarded as certifying his entrance upon the Christian life. I am not aware that he ever alluded to the subject even in his most confidential intercourse. He was more solicitous about the present evidence of his union with Christ than the time of his conversion. From an early bias of mind, partly constitutional, and doubtless favored by education, he was led from the first to regard personal religion in its severer aspects, as exacting a life of strict and holy obedience to the divine law; and while he never for a moment doubted the fulness of divine grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ, he came slowly to the conviction that he was warranted, from any experience he might have, that he had himself been renewed by the Holy Ghost, and was truly a child of God. It is interesting in this connection to note among his papers a manuscript, in his own hand, dated August 12, 1818 (the date is significant, as completing the first year of his connection with the bank), which consists of a series of Scripture texts, evidently selected as expressive of his religious views, and such as a devout and humble Christian would desire to have fixed in his memory. The selection is principally

from the Psalms, and concludes with the verse: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

It was not, however, until the year 1821, four years after his coming to Auburn, that he made a public profession of religion, although in the meanwhile his associations, sympathies and forming friendships centered in the church. The step was taken with characteristic self-distrust, and not without some kind pressure from judicious Christian friends. Just then the fruits of ^{one} ~~those~~ revivals, which followed each other in rapid succession from 1817 to 1826, were being gathered. A number of names had been enrolled as candidates for admission to the church, at the communion near at hand, to be read, as our custom is, from the pulpit on the appointed Sabbath, when at the last moment, he yielded to the solicitations of the pastor, in a reply, the humility of which will surprise no one who knew him: "*Well, if you will, put my name at the bottom of the list.*" So, indeed, it stands in the order of record on the church register for that communion, preceded by seventy-two names added to the roll on that day. More than twenty-three hundred names follow his on our catalogue; but what one of them more worthy the place of honor to-day, esteemed and precious as many of them are in the memory of the Church?

In 1827, six years after he became a communicant, Mr. Seymour was elected a ruling elder with a special mark of confidence, his name heading the list of the six newly chosen officers. But the same distrust of himself which led him to hesitate in assuming the vows of a religious profession, with, perhaps, the added consideration of duties that pressed him in a position where his time was not his own, led him to decline. But, five years after, the death of Father Oliphant creating a vacancy in the session, he

was again chosen to this office. He had given no intimation of any change of mind in this regard, unless it was his silence, which was often more potent than speech. While thus holding the matter in suspense, it so occurred that he made a call of sympathy on a brother beloved (then, as now, a member of the session) under a sore bereavement, who, before the interview closed, tenderly alluded to the subject of his acceptance of the proposed office, and urged a view which evidently had not been considered. The good man broke into tears, and said nothing as he went away. But the decision was made; and the following Sabbath he was set apart to this office, which he held until his death, a period of forty-three years. His veneration for the godly man, whose place in the eldership he was called to fill, was profound. He would often refer in subsequent life to his example, or quote some pithy saying of his, none the less relished for its quaintness. It was an affectionate reverence for a character of singular piety and uncommon experience in divine things, that in the ignorant, superstitious mind might easily degenerate into saint worship, but which in our brother was the very spirit and essence of "the communion of saints." Here let me say that I have seldom known one who made so much of his Christian friendships. He held them as the most sacred of his possessions, comely as "the pleasant fruits," and fragrant as "the spices" which grow in the "garden of the Beloved." They entered into his everyday happiness as a gracious stimulus, and gave form and sweetness to his hopes beyond the grave. This it was that made him the true, firm, cherished friend he was in a circle of kindred spirits, many of whom departed before him to the blessed world, leaving others who love dearly his memory, and associate with it some of the richest of their life experiences.

As one of the responsible guides of the church in its spiritual affairs, Mr. Seymour was ever ready to share the burden, heavily as it might press at times; and, although sparing of his words, we always knew where to find him. No interest pertaining to its welfare escaped his notice, and every measure to promote its prosperity received his co-operation. Although a man of quiet ways and noiseless piety, he was from the first in hearty sympathy with the revival preaching and methods which, in this part of the State, opened a new era in evangelistic effort. As far back as 1826, while Mr. Finney was holding a series of protracted meetings in the village of Utica, Mr. Seymour was one of five or six of like mind, who spent an entire forenoon in consultation and prayer in his own private room in the Bank, the result of which was the despatch, with the ready approbation of the pastor, of a special messenger the same day to invite the noted revivalist to Auburn; and this it will be remembered, when it required positive convictions and no little courage to be known as a "*Finneyite*." Equally good and wise men differed, in those days, as to the wisdom of the measures and the soundness of doctrinal views which characterized this great revival movement; and if the controversy ran high, no one can doubt in the review that both parties were alike sincere in striving, on the one hand, for purity of doctrine, and on the other for the quickening of the church and the salvation of souls. The results of Mr. Finney's visits to this place, at the time of which I speak, and subsequently in 1831, need now no vindication; and the initial step which brought him here is, for this reason, the more worthy of record. The personal attachment of Mr. Seymour for Mr. Finney, commencing with his labors here in 1826, continued through life (they died within a few months of each other), and

his generous bequest to Oberlin College is to be regarded not less a token of affectionate esteem for its late president, than of interest in the cause of Christian education.

In his several relations to the church as one of its spiritual rulers, Mr. Seymour exhibited the same substantial qualities with which he conducted the business of life. His well-poised mind and practical good sense; his quiet unvarying firmness, genuine courtesy, and unaffected spirituality qualified him in an eminent degree for the duties of the eldership, both in counsel and discipline; while his conspicuous integrity, with the ceaseless flow of his benevolence in the various directions which an open-hearted and thoughtful charity takes, gave him unwonted influence in the community and with all classes. His love for the church was seen in the steadiness of his devotion to its welfare, always contributing liberally to its temporal support or in lifting it out of an emergency, preserving a sensitive regard for its spiritual growth, and maintaining toward all its members—the youngest and the humblest—a sincere affection, as one with them in Christ Jesus. We recall his example as a constant attendant upon its worship and ordinances, not once only but twice, on the Sabbath to the last; for he would no more do things by halves in religion than in finance, in the church than in the bank, but rounded out his duties to God with the same punctuality and exactness with which he met his obligations to men. He was as regular in his attendance at the weekly service for social prayer, though often his multiplied cares, and in later life the infirmities of age, would have been to a less devoted spirit a reason for absence. Never forward, he was ever ready to take part in its exercises; and we shall not soon forget his simple, pertinent, fervent prayers, as unostentatious as his deeds,

both breathing the same spirit, and done "as unto the Lord and not unto men."

The two institutions, educational and charitable, in our city, with which Mr. Seymour was more especially identified, and which shared most largely in his benefactions, are the Theological Seminary and the Orphan Asylum. He served both as a trustee—the former from 1829 to 1845; the latter from its organization in 1852—and as president, until his death. He took part in the first subscription to locate the Seminary in Auburn, in 1818, and was its steadfast and cherished friend through all its vicissitudes from the days of struggling weakness to its present condition of assured prosperity. In many ways, alike creditable to his mind and heart, he attached to himself the professors, and, particularly at an early day, many of the students by strongest ties of esteem and love. By whatever threads of sympathy he might be connected with those who went from its walls to their work of preaching Christ, in our own or other lands, he followed them with his prayers, and often with some visible token of abiding interest in their labors. He remembered them, if missionaries, home or foreign, not only in his systematic gifts to the cause, but in their individual work; and kept himself open to opportunities of more direct sympathy and aid toward them and their families. The present faculty and students of the Seminary testified their respect for his memory by attending his funeral in a body; and I have before me several letters, written since his death, by former professors of the institution, in each of which is emphasized some excellence or cluster of qualities for which they remember him with veneration and affection.*

* The venerable Dr. L. Halsey (now of Western Theological Seminary, Pa.), Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Auburn from 1837-1844, writes: "I

In other ways, but with equal satisfaction, he served the institution which provided a home for the orphan. Its purpose was so directly in the line of his sympathies that he gave to its management much thought and personal attention. Though never married, and without a family of his own, no appeal more readily reached his heart than that which came from helpless and neglected childhood; and nothing more gratifying to his sensibilities than such a channel for the continuous current of benevolent feeling. Such good offices are not forgotten. His funeral solemnities, characterized as they were by many tokens of public respect, and by the presence of five distinct branches of his kindred, from different and distant places, were invested with singular pathos, as that line of orphan children left each a simple flower on his coffin while passing to take the

ever considered, after long and intimate acquaintance, our departed friend the best model of Christianity in ordinary social life I have ever known—‘Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’ . . . I bless God that He ever brought me to the knowledge and confidence of James S. Seymour. Like the bones of the dead prophet, the touch revives me. I am refreshed by the fragrance of his memory.” . . .

The Rev. J. Few Smith, D.D., of Newark, N. J., Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Theology in Auburn from 1848 to 1851, after referring to the open interest Mr. S. manifested in all that pertained to the advancement of pure religion, says: “I have ever regarded him (and so have my family) as one of the best men that I knew, whom it was a privilege to have as a friend; and I never visited him, or received a visit from him (and his visits were always occasions of gladness to us), without feeling nearer to my Saviour, and getting new thoughtfulness about life’s work, and new views of the preciousness of Christ.”

The Rev. Dr. L. P. Hickok, now of Amherst, Mass., Professor of Christian Theology in Auburn 1844–52, in a communication furnished at my request, and kindly put to my use, writes: “Mr. Seymour has been for many years my beloved friend and trusted counsellor, and my heart is full of cherished sympathies and precious impressions from our long and intimate communion; but my only aim now is a sketch of the controlling elements which, in combination, prompted his conduct and established his well-earned reputation.” . . . I would here express my obligations to this discriminating analysis of a character which, though transparent from its simplicity, is for such reason liable to be rated below its true worth.

last look of the familiar face of their friend and patron, touching all hearts with a sympathy akin to that when a father is taken from a dependent household. It was a tribute to goodness beyond the pomp of words, or studied phrase, or yet of sculptured stone.

I have thus grouped details and incidents which might otherwise appear trivial or commonplace, that we may see how a life, by no means eventful, may branch out in numberless directions; and though not distinguished by what we call great opportunities or striking achievements, may nevertheless become one of signal power in its results. It is more difficult, but not less essential to the right estimate of such a life, to ascertain the hidden springs of action, which have given it direction and value. We shall not find the secret in rare intellectual endowments; for though Mr. Seymour had a mind of excellent stamp with more than ordinary culture, there was nothing in him brilliant, nothing that might be called genius, unless it was a superior faculty for doing good. He had not even a sphere of action above the common plane, but was restricted to one filled with the ever-recurring sameness of a specific line of occupation, and demanding only those qualities necessary to the right conduct of the daily business of life.

Nevertheless—and here is the lesson that comes from the life of this truly good man—if the qualities which were most characteristic of him were of the less dazzling order, they certainly were developed in rare combination and into unusual prominence. I should be justified in holding up his example before this community where he is best known, as a thorough business man, prompt, systematic, diligent, sagacious, prudent, trustful, and under all circumstances equal to the place and the occasion. Neither should I

have any hesitation in speaking of him as a pattern of the social virtues, in the relations of friendship and common intercourse—kind and courteous, ever respectful of the feelings of others and of their good name; benevolent and sympathetic without vanity and devoid of ostentation. And knowing his Christian life, not only in its outward walk, as all saw it, but in its ground principles, I could point to James S. Seymour in the very spirit of the apostolic precept and say,—Be ye followers of him who through faith and patience has inherited the promises. But what impresses me more than all in his character, is the consistency and harmony with which the virtues most esteemed among men, and the Christian graces that most adorn a spiritual and unworldly life, are built together and blend in such strength and beauty. There was in him a universal attention to duty, which would not permit the neglect of one obligation for the sake of discharging any other. He could not excuse in himself the omission of a single duty he owed to others, on the ground of any claim religion might have upon his time and service; nor on the other hand could he find any apology for the neglect of personal piety, in the pressure of worldly care. Moreover, he was a man always consistent with himself. He had no vagaries of mind or conduct. His life never broke off in tangents. What he did was always from fixed cherished principles, and never from mere impulse or momentary excitement. Hence the tenacity with which he adhered to opinions once formed in his best judgment, and pursued the line of conduct he had satisfied himself was right. No man among us less disposed to contest his ground; but I verily believe that there was no earthly power that could have forced him to yield his convictions, or could have driven him from his duty.

What, then, were the principles which moved and controlled his active life? Here his character will bear the closest scrutiny; and the first to be mentioned is HONESTY. He was, in the strictest sense of the term, an honest man. With him honesty was but another name for that sentiment of justice and equity which is watchful of another's interest and secures to him all that is his due. In the business of banking, to which he was devoted, it was the fixed purpose to apply all money values he managed, with all their proceeds, to their rightful owners. He had a nice sense of honor in this particular, which it is well to emphasize in view of the loose and variable sense in which financial honesty is too commonly held in our day. He would no sooner have used, directly or indirectly for his own advantage, funds entrusted to his care, than he would have betrayed the confidence reposed in him, to rob the vault of the bank and flee the town. The opportunities of his position were frequent, and to one of lower views of integrity sufficiently tempting, to serve himself in nameless ways with what was not his own. He was ever dealing with money, or its representative, and often as the special guardian of personal property confided to his management; and it was with him a fixed principle to handle every such trust for the sole benefit of the individual to whom it properly belonged. In this regard not a breath of suspicion ever tainted his good name. On the contrary, his thorough honesty, not only in transactions open to the inspection of his associates, but in this more private stewardship, is the one trait for which, in financial circles, he was known and honored. There are men who are honest as against the coarse temptation to downright stealing, restrained by the shame of discovery or the penalty of the law, who are not honest as against the more subtle temptation to use what is

thus committed to them in private speculations, or in like illegitimate ways, and run the hazard of coming out right in the end. In this connection I have thought with what determined purpose, from the first, he must have encountered and resisted the liability to misuse such trusts, arising from carelessness or impatience, or self-interest, under the cover of well-meaning intention; and with what tenacity of resolution he must have shut out all such considerations to maintain this strict and scrupulous fidelity, that, so far as his agency went, all values should find their way into the hands where they rightfully belonged, and in the exact measure of every just personal claim. He began with this principle in his youth and kept it until honesty was with him a confirmed habit—a part of his life, the crown and glory of his old age. I do not believe that his resolution in this respect ever wavered, nor that his integrity ever faltered. To him a breach of trust had no excuse—not the shadow of an apology. He believed in the honesty of the Golden Rule—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" and such was his estimate of what was just as between man and man, that a conversion to one's self of what belonged to another, under whatever disguise, was a crime against civil society, and could offer no possible palliation for its enormity. The ever-occurring instances of speculation, embezzlement and fraud, so destructive of the mutual confidence on which business and social order rest, come from another school than that in which he was trained; and they could find no man to whom they were more abhorrent and detestable.

This was Mr. Seymour's character as a banker. In any other vocation, he would have been equally exact and scrupulous in all his dealings, and in every representation

of value, up to the full standard of Christian integrity. I commend his example to every young man on the threshold of business life against all other theories of just dealing, and all usages to the contrary, from whatever source, and assure him, in the light of an honored and successful life, of the abiding truth of that old fashioned maxim: "*Honesty is the best policy.*"

Another distinctive principle of action with Mr. Seymour was KINDNESS. He had a quick, deep sympathy with his kind that made him one in feeling and interest with all that concerns humanity. His honesty would have been a very rugged feature in his character without this quality of kindness, which, if not so directly the result of culture and occupation, grew into a principle that in other directions shaped and governed his conduct. He would no sooner have done an unkind than a dishonest act. At the same time, this kindliness of nature would have been weakness of character but for his profound sense of what was just and right. So, also, his firmness when once his mind reached a conviction, whatever the point at issue, would, in its self-possessed unmovableness, have been simple obstinacy, but for that considerate carefulness which looked the whole ground over before arriving at a decision, and that instinctive gentleness which disarmed active opposition, and inspired the feeling that he could hardly be in the wrong.

In many ways his kindness took shape from a just view of the rights of others. He pitied injured and suffering humanity wherever found, and hated cruelty and oppression in every form. His voice was not heard in the streets, nor in public gatherings for the demonstration of sympathy; but he was always prompt and generous in his deeds, and often when no man besides himself knew from what

source the help came. He was secretive in his benevolence, perhaps too much so for immediate effect upon others, but quite in the spirit of our Lord's caution, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, *to be seen of them.*" He shrank from the parade of giving, and more than this, would betray annoyance at any mention of his charities. He did not need the stimulus of example or the pressure of rhetorical appeal, much less the sting of conscience, to do a generous act. He gave from other motives, and sought in other ways the knowledge of want and suffering, and was as intelligent and systematic in his gifts as in the routine of his daily business. And this was true of his many good deeds, whether to the poor and sick within his personal knowledge; or the fugitive slave that came to his door, sure of help and a kind word; or the orphan sheltered, yet dependent; or the distant heathen perishing in ignorance of the Gospel. He had compassion for the wretched drunkard notwithstanding his vices; and was an early and steadfast supporter of the cause of temperance, both in his practice and gifts. His interest in the more recent movement under the auspices of the Women's Christian Temperance Union here deserves record, as indicating the methods in which he had most confidence of coping with the terrible evil of intemperance—prayer and kindness—uniting personal effort with dependence upon God, as in all other Christian work. The principle of doing good was inwrought in his life, and "the cause he knew not he searched out." In nameless and unusual ways he dispensed his charities; but always with discretion, and often with the greatest delicacy. He did not give in spasms of good feeling, or when the mood was on him, but constantly and consistently in the lines of thoughtful consideration. There can be no better illustration of this aspect of

his character than his last will and testament, which has been received with such general favor. Varied and numerous as are his public bequests, they are in each instance a remembrance of some object which he was accustomed to aid in some form while living, and furnish an example of posthumous beneficence worthy of imitation.

Mr. Seymour acquired an ample fortune, for "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth." He used comparatively little upon himself. He had no expensive tastes to gratify, and least of all a disposition to make a show of his wealth. His self-control and simplicity of habit, untempered by his warm and genial sympathy, would have made him an ascetic. But in him temperance was self-sacrifice, that gratified itself in making others happy. It gave him patience in doing good—less intent upon appreciation of a kind act, than upon doing the kindness. No one ever suspected him of avarice more than of falsehood and dishonesty; and the ambition to be rich, for the sake of riches, never appears to have crossed his mind. The law of kindness was written on his heart, and found expression in many ways. We know his love for flowers and choice varieties of fruit; and how he would send them on friendly messages, with a sweeter zest in the thought of the pleasure they would give to others. He had a vein of humor, which often enlivened his conversation; and he could rarely write a letter on business to a friend without some side communication which he knew would be pleasing, or the enclosure of some little memento to which was attached some agreeable association. If a book had given him entertainment, and more especially spiritual profit, he would distribute copies of it where he knew it would be appreciated. Whatever gave him pleasure he judged would give pleasure to those of kindred tastes and spirit. He thought of strangers who

might be kept here over the Sabbath; and was wont in his more active days to visit the hotels Saturday evenings, to tender his attentions and his pew, that they might feel at home in the house of God. Thus was his spontaneous kindness ever diffusing itself; and I doubt if a day in the year passed without his doing something, in one way or another, to make others better and happier. Day by day he went down into the cold mine of this world's toil, not to heap up treasures for himself, but that he might be "rich in good works," as if he held the secret of a heavenly alchemy by which to transmute "the unrighteous mammon" into "the soft and virtuous charities of life."

I am familiar with a spring of pure, bright water, in the mountains of my native region, which, for its value, has been carefully curbed. It is never affected visibly either by rains or drought, but is always full, with an even, constant overflow, which is quickly hidden among the dead leaves and decay of the woods, where the mosses find it, and the forest flower drinks of it, and the rootlets of the great trees gather it, till every growth within its reach is fresher and stronger for its presence. But when you search for its source you come only to a back ground of savage ledges, overhanging cold and dark recesses among huge rocks, piled one on the other by some great convulsion, where Nature, out of sight, distils from the current atmosphere, drop by drop, the dew which feeds the spring. Such is the overflow of a kindly benevolent life, over against the cold rugged side of this world's drudge and toil.

In addition to the characteristic principles already named, there was the element of GODLINESS. Our departed friend was as devout and godly as he was honest and kind. This gave a completeness to his character

which otherwise would have been wanting. He was a better Christian for his uprightness and humane disposition, as he was a better man for the holier element which diffused its influence through his entire experience. His honesty and kindness tempered his piety and made it both sincere and tender, while at the same time his piety reacted more strongly upon the moral virtues and elevated them into Christian graces. Honesty with him was practical righteousness, which springs from the fear of God; and kindness, the benevolence that does good to man for Jesus' sake. His smallest favor was as the "cup of cold water in the name of a disciple," and brought with it "a disciple's reward." His supreme governing principle was godliness; and thus every grace and virtue he had, became fixed, persevering, and enduring, because strengthened and upheld by the peace and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost.

It may be thought a defect in his Christian experience that it lacked the joyousness which belongs to "the full assurance of hope." This arose, in part, as before indicated, from his extreme caution, which would not allow of a conclusion on any subject without the clearest attainable evidence. It doubtless led him to scrutinize the ground of his hope of salvation on all sides, not less in view of the requirements of the divine holiness, than in the light of divine grace. He was never, to my knowledge, subject to religious depression; and I am not aware that he ever rose to any great elevation of feeling; but for evenness of spirituality and consistency of conduct, I have rarely known his equal. His piety early received the Puritan stamp, rigid, scrupulous and conscientious, like his honesty, but grew with his years more flexible and kindly, without losing in any measure its spiritual tone;

and was content in others, of different creed and education, with the image of Christ reflected in the character and daily life. He was a devout and studious reader of the Bible, and stored his mind with its precious truths. He had little to say of his own experience, even to those with whom he was on terms of closest intimacy, but before his God he kept his heart as open as the light of day. He abounded in prayer, and had an abiding faith in its efficacy. He was wont to pray for single persons with whom he was associated in business or friendship, and whose conversion he waited for in longing desire. He prayed for specific things, and went to all his duties and daily work in a prayerful frame. Once in conversation with a Christian brother, with whom for many years he had maintained the most intimate fellowship, he remarked: "I have learned to go to God with every thing." "*Every* thing?" asked his friend, "all the little details of business?" "Yes," was the reply, "*Every thing!*" Here is a volume in a sentence. It discloses the secret of an unworldly life in the midst of exacting worldly occupation, and we are not surprised that he was so subdued to grace, or that his conduct was so unblamable in the sight of men, and his life so fruitful of blessing to others. His firm and cordial belief of the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel was the foundation of his character, and the source of his richest enjoyment. Self-righteousness he utterly renounced, and rested in Christ alone for acceptance with God. He found nothing in his good deeds whereof to boast, and, with the apostle, counted "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." Without reserve, and sometimes with tears, he expressed his entire reliance on the mere mercy and grace of God. He saw no other foundation; he desired no other; and yet he was

“careful to maintain good works.” He was ever mindful of the account he must render at last of his stewardship. How like him in his readiness to give a religious turn, spontaneously and easily, to a subject, is this closing sentence of his letter, already referred to, tendering his resignation as President of the Bank? “And now, as my stewardship with your institution is about to close, my mind naturally turns to that account we must all give as stewards at the higher tribunal; and, as one after another we are called to render that account, I pray that each may receive the welcome plaudit, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant’ !”

It was not until eight years after this sentence was penned, that the final summons came to him suddenly, though not without some of the premonitions of advanced age. He had been in his place at the bank only a day or two before, and had risen from his bed about his usual hour in the morning, when almost immediately he was seized with an attack, obstructing the arterial circulation of the brain,* in which condition he remained for several days, with brief intervals of partial consciousness, and apparently without pain, until he sank away as gently as a child falls to sleep. All the circumstances of his sickness and death were kindly ordered. Surrounded with every needed attention, neither husband nor father could have received more delicate and loving ministrations from kindred who watched at his couch, with others who, by years of domestic association, had cheered his home, and were endeared to him as if bound to him in ties of family affection. What thoughts occupied his spirit as it lingered in the dissolving tabernacle, during those days of

*This is a form of disease of the brain known to the medical profession as arising from thrombosis in the cerebral arteries impaired by age.

waiting in which he was done with earth, though not yet at rest, we may not know, for he gave no intelligible sign by word or look, unless in a single instance, when he was heard to repeat for a few moments some words of prayer with almost his wonted clearness and fervor. But we knew that he was in the arms of HIM whom he trusted as the lover of his soul, and that Jesus himself was there to fulfil His own word: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Thus our brother died, as he had lived, "unto the Lord." And henceforth we are to think of him as "FOREVER WITH THE LORD."

Surely I may say, brethren and friends, a man of God has been among us, and, from youth to old age, taught us how "to use this world as not abusing it," and how to leave it in faith and hope and peace. Some of you have known him all these years, and are my witnesses that I have not indulged in mere eulogy, but have spoken the sober truth. May we all be ready to meet him before that "HIGHER TRIBUNAL" to which he has now gone and whither we all hasten! Who can fail to be impressed, in the sharp contrast which his life presents, with the littleness and insignificance of wealth devoted to selfish purposes? He has illustrated the true value of riches, justly acquired and faithfully used like other gifts of power, for the common welfare; and the lesson comes too rarely out of the lives of the rich to suffer one such example to be forgotten. It exemplifies, while it enforces, the apostolic injunction: "CHARGE THEM THAT ARE RICH IN THIS WORLD, THAT THEY BE NOT HIGHMINDED NOR TRUST IN UNCERTAIN RICHES, BUT IN THE LIVING GOD, WHO GIVETH US RICHLY ALL THINGS TO ENJOY; THAT THEY DO GOOD; THAT THEY BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS, READY TO DISTRIBUTE, WILLING TO

COMMUNICATE ; LAYING UP IN STORE FOR THEMSELVES A GOOD FOUNDATION AGAINST THE TIME TO COME, THAT THEY MAY LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE."

To young men, more especially, is he to be commended as a safe pattern in all that constitutes a sterling character. It reconciles devotion to worldly pursuits, with the highest spiritual aims; thorough honesty, with large success; diligence in business, with fervor of zeal in the service of Christ; and the praise of men, with the favor of God. For many of you he cherished a personal interest and affection while living, and all of you he has remembered, in common with the young men of Auburn, in a noble benefaction, by which "he, being dead, yet speaketh." Let me beseech you, by his many exertions, sacrifices, and prayers on your behalf; by the piety and usefulness of his life, and the hopes that crown his death, to remember James S. Seymour by making a thankful and honest use of his bounty, imitating the distinctive features of his example, and, above all, by choosing the Saviour whom he honored, and in whom he trusted for life eternal.

APPENDIX A.

RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT.

AT a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Cayuga Asylum for Destitute Children, held on Saturday, December 4, 1875, the following resolutions were adopted:

RESOLVED, That we have heard with sentiments of profound sorrow the announcement of the death of JAMES S. SEYMOUR, the President of this Board from its organization, a period of more than twenty-three years.

Mr. Seymour's long connection with this charity was marked by the same religious earnestness, sincere benevolence, prudent counsel, and systematic liberality which characterized his relations to all worthy undertakings for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men,—the interests of none of which were more constantly in his thoughts or nearer his heart, than those of the Cayuga Asylum for Destitute Children. We feel that it is not too much to say that in his death the Asylum has lost its oldest and best friend.

RESOLVED, That our Secretary furnish a copy of these resolutions to the daily papers of the city for publication, and that the Board attend the funeral of its revered President in a body.

H. N. LOCKWOOD,
Sec'y Board of Trustees.

At a meeting of the Directors of the National Bank of Auburn, held at their banking house, on the sixth day of December, 1875, Mr. C. H. Merriman having announced the death of the President, on motion, Messrs. E. H. Avery, E. W. Arms, and C. H. Merriman were appointed a committee to present resolutions appropriate to the occasion.

The committee thereupon retired, and on their return it was stated by Mr. Avery that they had experienced much embarrassment in the preparation of the resolutions about to be submitted, owing to the long and remarkable life of the deceased, whose influence for good has been felt

not only on this institution, but in every sphere of philanthropic and Christian work. They had, however, regarded it as most appropriate to refer, in the resolutions they are about to submit to the Board, only to his general and well-known life and character, and to those phases of it more immediately connected with this institution, without enlarging upon his characteristics as exhibited in other public trusts and in connection with the religious and charitable institutions of our city and county. The following preamble and resolutions were then submitted and unanimously adopted :

WHEREAS, The sad intelligence which has been communicated to this Board of the death, on the third instant, of JAMES S. SEYMOUR, our esteemed and venerable President, who was the last survivor of the original founders of this institution, and one of the oldest bankers in the State, renders it eminently proper that some expression of the appreciation with which he was regarded by his associates, and recognition of his long and faithful services, should be taken by this Board. Therefore be it

Resolved, That in the death of our valued friend and late associate, who has for nearly three-score years, and during the entire existence of this institution, with such perfect satisfaction, distinguished fidelity, and marked ability discharged the duties of its chief manager and presiding officer, and by whose wise counsels and judicious administration, strict integrity and faithful labors it was established, and during all these years has been maintained upon a solid and permanent foundation, this institution has sustained a heavy loss in thus being deprived of that wisdom, discretion, and practical experience upon which it has so long been accustomed to rely.

Resolved, That by this dispensation of Providence his surviving associates feel deeply the sad bereavement which has taken from them one who by his genial manner, culture, and uniform kindness had won their warmest affection and highest esteem.

Resolved, That by reason of his constant and systematic benevolence, flowing from a generous nature and kind heart ever in sympathy with, and aiding and encouraging the poor and needy, and supplying the wants of the homeless and the destitute, his death has caused a vacancy in this community which will long be felt and mourned in many households and by many, very many, who will ever bless and revere his memory.

Resolved, That by his blameless Christian character, upon which the breath of suspicion never rested ; by his undeviating fidelity to duty and unswerving devotion to the cause of his Master during a long life, engrossed for the most part in active business, and surrounded by all the

perplexities, vexations, cares, and temptations incident thereto, he has left a rare example of an honored, worthy, successful Christian life, filled with love and kindness and usefulness, as a rich legacy which may freely and with profit be appropriated and shared by all.

Resolved, That the members of this Board will attend his funeral to-day in a body, and that these resolutions be entered upon the records of this bank and published in the city papers.

APPENDIX B.

MR. SEYMOUR'S PUBLIC BEQUESTS.

To the Cayuga Asylum for Destitute Children, in Auburn, a permanent fund, interest only to be used.....	\$10,000
To the Home for the Friendless, in Auburn, a permanent fund, the interest only to be used.....	5,000
To the Theological Seminary of Auburn.....	5,000
To the Congregational Church in West Hartford, Conn.....	3,000
To the Deaf and Dumb Asylum of Hartford, Conn.....	5,000
To the Hartford Hospital, located in the City of Hartford, Conn.	5,000
To the Theological Institute of Connecticut, located in Hartford,	5,000
To Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.....	5,000
To Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.....	3,000
To Beloit College, Beloit, Wis.....	3,000
To the American and Foreign Christian Union.....	5,000
To the American Bible Society.....	5,000
To the American Home Missionary Society.....	10,000
And in addition a portion of the residuary of the estate, which portion it is estimated* may amount to.....	6,000

* The estimate of this and the subsequent residuary legacies, made at the time the list was published, and before the required appraisal of the estate, is found to be too low by at least 20 per cent. The amounts, however, are allowed to stand as originally estimated. The private bequests are proportionately liberal, and for the most part distributed among his kindred.

To the Relief Fund for Disabled Ministers in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church a portion of the residuary, estimated at.....	6,000
To the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, as above, estimated at.....	6,000
To the Young Men's Christian Association of the City of Auburn, as above, estimated at.....	12,000
To the First Presbyterian Church in Auburn, as above, estimated at	12,000
To the Calvary Church (known as Seymour Chapel) in Auburn, as above, estimated at.....	12,000
For the purpose of founding a Hospital in the city of Auburn, as above, estimated at.....	18,000
For the purpose of founding a Public Library in the city of Auburn.....	18,000
And in addition, for the purpose last mentioned, the store No. 80 on the south side of Genessee street, with lot in the rear.	

